

Owners of Toronto web-hosting company charged in massive child pornography bust

Chris Fox, CP24.com

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A years-long investigation into an online "big box store" for child pornography has led to the arrest of five people associated with the Toronto-based web hosting company where the site stored its "horrific" content, Ontario Provincial Police say.

The investigation, dubbed Project Greenwell, began in October, 2012 after Toronto police received numerous tips alerting them to the existence of a child pornography website that could be traced back to the Toronto-based web hosting company YesUp Media.

OPP say that members of the TPS executed a search warrant at the business on Gordon Baker Road in North York in search of approximately 800 child sex abuse files but soon realized that they had stumbled upon a much larger operation.

A total of 32 servers that were filled with approximately 1,000 terabytes of data were ultimately seized and a larger, multi-jurisdictional investigation was commenced. **PHOTOS**

At a news conference on Thursday, OPP Det. Insp. David MacDonald said that investigators have since determined that a massive child pornography website with 60,000 registered users in at least 116 different countries was hosted at the location.

That website, he said, was subsequently traced back to a man in Vietnam who remains outstanding.

Police believe that man never actually stepped foot in Canada and arranged for the child sexual abuse material to be hosted by the company "remotely."

The charges announced by police on Thursday relate to a separate investigation that began in 2014 and targeted the owners of the business that hosted the content for the website.

MacDonald said that it is the belief of investigators that all of the individuals charged were aware of the nature of the content that was being hosted on their servers and chose to do nothing.

He said that he believes this is the first time in Canada that the owners of a web hosting company have been charged in connection with a child pornography investigation.

"We believe that without the infrastructure in place the distribution of child pornography images could never occur on a global scale like this, so hopefully the message is clear to other web hosts. You can't permit this to happen inside your infrastructure and you have a legal obligation to report to police once you become aware of this," he said.

Website had only been up and running for months

MacDonald said that the website had only been up and running for about six months when police executed the initial search warrant but had "grown dramatically" during that time, both in terms of the number of members and the sheer amount of child sex abuse images that it hosted.

He said that the data seized during the operation was so extensive that Ontario Provincial Police initially did not have the capacity to store it all.

"When we forensically examine evidence like this we copy it and deal with the copy, so when you seize evidence of this size you have to be able to copy it and put it somewhere and in 2012 we just did not have that sort of storage space," he said, "It was just the beginning of the sort of technical complexity we faced with this investigation."

The investigation into the child pornography website has led to countless other investigations around the globe.

MacDonald said that investigators uncovered the financial information for 19,013 people who purchased premium memberships to the website and have passed that on to the appropriate authorities.

A spokesperson for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security also told reporters at Thursday's news conference that information from the OPP investigation has led to the identification of roughly 2,000 suspects in the United States alone.

MacDonald said that the images hosted on the site depicted victims all around the world.

He said that despite only being up and running for a period of months, the images hosted on the website were downloaded approximately 19 million times.



Ontario Provincial Police are seen during a press conference to announce the result of a years-long investigation into a child pornography operation. (Kenneth Dishman)

"These are not simple images of children in bathing suits; these are really, really horrific," he said.

Zhen He (Patrick) Zeng, 40, of Richmond Hill, Zhen Yu (Jeff) Zeng, 42, of Richmond Hill, Chin Choi (Peter) Kok, 52, of Richmond Hill, Sui Hua (Jeff) Ye, 47, of Aurora and Wen (Larry) Li, 31, of Toronto, are facing a combined 11 charges in connection with the investigation. The charges they are facing including making available child pornography and possessing child pornography,

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Paramedics say a man in his 20s was taken to hospital with serious injuries after a stabbing in the area of Fraser Avenue and Liberty Street.[cp24.com/news/man-in-hi...](https://www.cp24.com/news/man-in-hi...)

Man in his 20s taken to hospital after stabbing in Liberty Village

A man in his 20s has been seriously injured after being stabbed in the city's Liberty Village Monday evening.
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